

After examining the bird I marked the back with a red patch, applied with a spirit pen, hoping that this would enable further observation should it return to our garden. The bird was then released, 4 hours after capture.

No further sightings were made until one week later when on 8th May, the bird was recaptured in the garden, this time in a baited "walk-in" trap. The redmark that I had applied was so inconspicuous as to be useless as a field mark.

Examination of the body plumage again revealed dry flakes among the feathers. Although untidy in general appearance the bird seemed to be in good health. The ability to feed did not seem to be impaired by the deformity of the beak for the weight had increased to 10.2 gm. This increase can be accounted for by the fact that the bird had obviously been feeding at bait trays in the garden for there were still traces of food on the bill.

From previous observations carried out on the movement of silvereyes in our garden and from the recapture of banded birds it is evident that small groups of these birds regularly attend the feeding trays, perhaps daily. This would ensure a food source that could be exploited by a silver-eye with a deformity such as the one described. Maintenance of the plumage however, would be severely impaired and could lead to eventual deterioration of health. When caught the second time the bird's tail was more heavily soiled than before, and the preen gland was inspected and measured, the dimensions being 7.0 mm. x 4.5 mm.

The bird was released and has not been seen again.

—PERRY DE REBEIRA, Tuart Hill.

Masked Wood-Swallow in the Perth Area.—During the present century no ornithologist has reported mass movements of the Masked Wood-Swallow (*Artamus personatus*) in the environs of Perth, though J. R. Ford saw a single bird at Bibra Lake in October 1948 (*Emu*, 54: 213). The nearest record of a passage movement is by E. H. Sedgwick at Woorloo, 28 miles E.N.E. of Perth in October 1951 (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 5, 1956: 68). There is in the W.A. Museum a young bird collected by J. T. Tunney about 1896-97 at Bannister, just over 60 miles from Perth on the Albany Road.

However in the *Western Australian Year Book for 1900-01* A. W. Milligan stated that it was "frequently to be seen about Perth, in the late spring." In my summary of the birds of the Swan River district (*Emu*, 47, 1948: 281) I made the following comment: "This statement is very wide of the mark, for no other observer has reported it anywhere on the coastal plain. Short of dismissing the record as an error, which it is difficult to do with such a distinctive bird and the repute of the observer, one must assume that Milligan attempted to generalise from the experience of one unusual season. He only arrived in Perth from Victoria in 1897 and had no local ornithological lore to guide him." From observations I made at Gooseberry Hill and Helena Valley in October 1972 this must undoubtedly be the explanation.

On October 13 I arrived at my cottage at The Knoll, Gooseberry Hill, 10 miles east of Perth at 9.40 a.m. and became aware of a massed twittering of small birds very high up. They were Masked Wood-Swallows. There were about 200 individuals in a discrete flock, moving to the south-east towards the Helena valley. They had evidently not been travelling south along the searp but had moved in from the coastal plain, striking the searp at Knoll Hill, which has an altitude of nearly 750 feet. At 9.55 a.m. a flock of 30-40 birds appeared. It was a fine, clear, calm day with a haze over the buildings in the city of Perth. On October 26 I was at the cottage at 4.30 p.m., and at 5 p.m. I heard the same concerted twittering high up. There was a big concentration of Masked Wood-Swallows, some at the limit of visibility without the use of field glasses. At 5.15 p.m. a similar party appeared. Altogether there were about 200 birds, and all were moving to the south-east and east.

On October 30 at the CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research laboratory at Helena Valley, which is 14 miles north of Knoll Hill, I heard the same kind of twittering at 11.00 a.m. Very high up there was a knot of about 100 Masked Wood-Swallows, apparently moving up the valley.

Sedgwick's observation at Wooroloo was very similar to mine; he recorded a "large flock, possibly some hundreds observed travelling eastward at a considerable height on October 25, 1951." He also made an observation of a movement in the reverse direction, "a small flock at moderate height apparently travelling west, on April 12, 1953" (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 5, 1956: 68).

Towards the end of the year observers not infrequently record the species passing to the south-east of the State, and often nesting. Serventy & Whittell, *Birds of Western Australia*, 1967, p. 408, summarise several observations in the month of November of flocks arriving at Broome Hill, Lake Grace and Jerramungup.

Apparently the transit of October 1972 extended further west than normal, and something similar must have come under the notice of Milnigan in the late 1890's.

Ford's single bird at Bibra Lake in October 1948 might have been a straggler of a similar movement, not otherwise observed by anyone. As the birds fly very high when travelling the October passage movements may occur more frequently than present records suggest.

—D. L. SERVENTY, Nedlands.

[Since the foregoing note was set up I received some interesting information from Mr. C. F. H. Jenkins, Acting President of the National Parks Board, of an influx of a large number of Masked Wood-Swallows at national parks some 100 miles north of Perth in late October, and their subsequent nesting there. The following report is by Mr. A. Passfield, the park ranger, written from Cervantes, via Jurien on February 1, 1973: "The birds are definitely Masked Wood-Swallows (*Artamus personatus*) and I was fortunate to be at Watheroo National Park on the 27th October when a huge flock arrived. There were hundreds, and probably several thousand, in the flock which had arrived from the north and were heading south. It was late afternoon and as I watched they landed in a crop of lupins amid much chirping and excitement. . . . They were busily engaged in feeding on insects on the lupins and I was able to get a good description for later reference. A few days later, on the 1st November, I was at Alexander Morrison National Park and noticed many of these birds had paired off and nested, roughly a pair to every 20 acres, occasionally three birds together but never more. Each nest contained two eggs with an occasional nest having two very small young ones. At Tathra the following day the picture was the same, so I presumed these birds were part of the migration I had seen at Watheroo.

"Two weeks later, on the 15th November, I found several nests at the Jurien and Nambung Parks; these all contained two fledglings each and no eggs. An idea of numbers can be derived from the number of nests found. There was a nest every quarter of a mile of firebreak travelled. This would be more of an under-estimate than over, as I had to keep up with the plough, clear roots and stones from the break, and watch for nests as a side-line. Most of the birds have now left the district."

—D.L.S.]